



## **Tips to Keep Storytelling Going**

### **Shall I Tell You a Story!**

Storytelling is different from reading a book to a child. Making up stories for children inspires creativity and allows children to explore their imaginations by enabling them to create their own scenes and characters in their heads. Use time creatively like on the bus or car, while cooking or at the table, waiting in line at the store, before bed or as a homework break – to share a small story.

Here are a few favorite ideas for family telling:

#### **True Family Stories**

Share all the sad, funny, wonderful tales of growing up from your background and from your child's. Think of these questions to get your started: Who was your best friend? Did you have a secret hiding place? What was the bravest thing you ever did? How did you get your nickname? Or, try casting off with one of these opening lines: "Once, when Grandma wasn't looking..." or, "I'll never forget the day..."

#### **Use the Family Album to Spark a Story**

Family photo albums, while they capture a snapshot in time, speak volumes for a family's history. Find a special photo and tell the story of the day the picture was taken. What was the weather like the day you brought baby home from hospital? Do you remember your excitement the first time you rode the Ferris wheel? Or, ask the child to make up the story that they think accompanies the photo.

#### **Bring Toys to Life**

Make up a story starring your child's favorite doll, truck or stuffed animal. Continue the sequel the next day.

#### **Your Child as Hero**

Put your child in the starring role in stories that appeal to her and speak to her needs/fears/interests. Ask her ideas as you tell or relate it all yourself.

#### **Elaborate and Exaggerate**

Have fun with the story and elaborate with dramatic facial expressions and different voices. Imagine how a giant would look versus a proper princess. A big bear would have a deep voice while a mouse would have a tiny, squeaky voice.

#### **Your Child's Day**

A story-account retelling your child's day works well, especially with younger listeners.

#### **Problem/trick tales**

As children get older, they enjoy tales with a problem to solve, or a trick to figure out.

## Turn Household Chores into Exciting Stories

- Turn vacuuming into an adventure. Tell your children to pretend they're a giant king from the land of Dustabaloo who loves to eat dust! Ask them to move with the vacuum as a hungry king would and to narrate his story while they clean.
- As your kids pick up their rooms, ask them to imagine how objects must feel now that they are getting put back where they belong. Are they relieved to be back on the shelf with their old familiar friends?
- Keep your child occupied while you are cooking. Tell him to take out the enormous invisible story book that's in the refrigerator. Clear a space for it on the counter and ask him to read you the story, page by page.



## Turn Off the Television and Turn On Your Imagination

- Have your kids become a button on the television remote control pad-maybe they're a VIDEO/VCR button, maybe they're the VOLUME CONTROL. Ask them to describe their story and why they do or do not like their job.
- Create your own talk show. Instead of people, have the guests be objects in nature. Ask your kids to play the host and interview a tree, a flower, or even poison ivy! Have them go into the audience and ask if there are any questions for the guest.
- Produce your own World Series. Rather than watching a ball game on TV, start an imaginary game instead. No bats or balls are necessary! Once your kids have been assigned their teams and positions, they will have no trouble enjoying the game.

## Travel Magic

- Pretend the inside of the car is a movie studio. Now have the kids create their own feature film. Instead of people have the stars be the objects in the car. Ask one child to play the snobby steering wheel and another to play the dainty windshield wiper, or even the tuna sandwich on the front seat. Become the director and yell "Action!" as each character performs a monologue about his life.
- Have your kids become famous detectives. Ask them to decipher the code being sent to them by the plane's wing. What adventure story is the wing trying to share with the passengers?
- Have your kids put on their "car hats" and describe them to you. Perhaps your son has a shiny steering wheel hat or your daughter is wearing a road map hat. You can tell your kids that driving hats only appear after seat belts are fastened, or that they appear only when the kids are speaking quietly.

Exchange family story greeting cards, create a family storytelling audio or video tape. There is really no end to this world of family storytelling. Have a grand journey.

Sources:

<http://www.wwnorton.com/catalog/spring00/storytellingtips.htm>

<http://www.cathyspagnoli.com/telltips/parents.htm>

<http://geoparent.com/family/techniques/storytellingstrategies.htm>